



U.S. Department  
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# News Release

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## **New Members Appointed to VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans**

### *Committee Makes Recommendation to VA Secretary*

WASHINGTON – Four new members have been appointed to the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, an expert panel that advises the Secretary on issues and programs affecting women Veterans. Established in 1983, the Committee makes recommendations to the Secretary for administrative and legislative changes.

"Women have made significant contributions to the safety and security of our great Nation. As we seek to enhance services for women Veterans, VA values the Committee's guidance," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "The Committee's recommendations help VA to identify and address gaps in service to better meet the needs of women Veterans today and in the future. VA welcomes the newest members of this important Committee."

Of the approximately 22 million living Veterans, about 2 million are women Veterans. They comprise 9.2 percent of the total Veteran population. VA estimates that by 2040, women Veterans will comprise approximately 16 percent of the total Veteran population.

"VA is committed to offering a full continuum of benefits and health care services and is transforming itself to meet the evolving needs of our women Veterans," said Elisa Basnight, Director of VA's Center for Women Veterans, who echoed Secretary McDonald's sentiments. "This advisory committee plays an integral role in our progress."

### **New members of the Committee:**

- Ms. Octavia Harris, El Cajon, California, a retired Command Master Chief, U.S. Navy; currently serves as a program manager of the Comprehensive Advanced Restorative Effort at the San Diego Naval Medical Center;
- Ms. Louisa Long Jaffe, Alexandria, Virginia, a retired Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army; currently serves as President and Chief Executive Officer of Technical and Project Engineering, LLC;
- Dr. Joyce Johnson, Chevy Chase, Maryland, a retired Rear Admiral, U.S. Public Health Service; currently practices medicine in the specialty of public health/preventive medicine, and serves as a global health/public health and management consultant; and
- Ms. Shannon McLaughlin, Sharon, Massachusetts, a Major serving full time in the Massachusetts National Guard, with combat service in Afghanistan.

The new Committee members, who are appointed to two-year terms, join Committee members Dr. Shirley Quarles of Atlanta, Georgia; Ms. Felipe Torres, Helotes, Texas; and Ms. Mary Westmoreland, Bronxville, New York, who were also reappointed for another term.

For more information about women Veterans, visit [www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet), or contact the Women Veterans Call Center at 1-855-829-6636. The call center is available to address concerns of women Veterans, their families and caregivers Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., ET, and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., ET.

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